

St Joseph's Primary School

Multi-Academy Trust

Part of De La Salle Academy Trust
Company No 8370788

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To:

Parents & Carers of St Joseph's students
Staff employed within St Joseph's School
Parishioners of St Joseph's Church

15th December 2023

Dear all,

Consultation to join St Clare Catholic Multi Academy Trust

We are excited to share the good news that work across the Diocese of Hallam to create our new, Catholic multi academy trust has completed it's first phase, St Clare CMAT has opened with its first 12 schools. We are writing to you because all our families, parents and carers are central to our shared vision, and we would like to hear your views on the next steps for our school.

We are stronger together. We are writing because we all want to continue to ensure the best possible Catholic education for all your children now, and in the future. This consultation process both celebrates and underlines our shared vision and purpose and helps us to take the next steps together.

As you may know, the Governing Body of St Joseph's school has been exploring the proposal for the School to progress towards joining St Clare Catholic Multi Academy Trust (CMAT) with other Catholic schools in the Diocese of Hallam.

After careful consideration and discussion, the Governing Body of St Joseph's school is now undertaking consultation with parents and carers and staff.

We are consulting with the view to St Joseph's school joining St Clare Catholic MAT together with other schools in our family group. Our proposed date for joining is the 1st September 2023.

We are being supported on this journey by the CEO of St Clare Catholic MAT, Steve Davies, and the St Clare Board of Directors, Chaired by Kev Smith. The consent of Bishop Ralph and the Diocesan Trustees, which is a requirement before any Diocesan school can join a MAT approved by the Diocese, has been given.

Steve Davies, CEO for St Clare made this comment:

"We are really looking forward to working with our schools on the next stage of this exciting journey. The challenges of the last two years have brought home just how much we rely on strong relationships between our schools and we are excited to build on those informal partnerships that already exist so that every school benefits from and contributes to the work of our wider Catholic

family. Blessed with so much, working together we can also unlock new resources to make a difference to our teachers, staff and governance. In this way we will enhance the distinctive Catholic education provided by each school so that every child and young person can reach their full potential."

A summary of all the benefits of this proposal and some helpful frequently asked questions are set out in an FAQ document which is available on our school website at [FAQ St Clare's Catholic Multi Academy Trust](#). We will also make a hard copy available on request from the school office. Information about St Clare CMAT can also be found on their website at www.stclarecmat.org.uk. We set out below some of the main points about this proposal.

What is an Academy?

Academies are publicly funded state schools that are independent of the Local Authority and receive funding directly from Central Government. The School will still be a Catholic School under the authority of the Bishop of Hallam and its religious designation will not change.

What is a Catholic Multi Academy Trust?

A Catholic Multi Academy Trust is a company set up by the Bishop to preserve, develop and protect Catholic education in the Diocese through providing support and resources within a single legal entity with shared common purpose.

Why is this being considered?

We believe being an Academy as part of St Clare Catholic MAT will give us greater opportunities for working more closely with other local Catholic schools and the wider community of schools and will secure Catholic education for the long term.

What are the advantages?

The Government is clear that the greater freedoms enjoyed by Academies are designed to allow schools to develop and to build on individual strengths in response to the needs of the community. We feel that the additional freedoms and flexibilities and the support that will be provided as part of the Catholic MAT would enable the Governors to better secure the long- term future of our School.

In addition, it will strengthen our Catholic identity, enabling the pooling of some resources. Vital new resources which will improve teaching and management practice within the schools. We will also achieve a greater degree of control of our finances which will help us to safeguard these funds for the benefit of children attending the School.

What are the disadvantages?

Our status as a stand-alone academy is bringing increasing pressures in the form of additional responsibilities and accountability. This is why we are considering joining together with other schools to form a strong Catholic MAT where responsibilities and accountability are shared with the MAT. We know that being part of a MAT is not a cure for every problem and challenge faced by a School and we are aware of some difference in opinion both locally and nationally on how effective MATs can be in supporting schools in challenging circumstances. The Diocese has looked at the evidence and lessons learned from other successful Catholic MATs in putting forward this proposal. However, we would encourage you to consider all the evidence and check the accuracy of assertions that are being made.

Will any changes to the School be made as a result of conversion?

Please be assured that the Catholic character, ethos and values of the School would remain unchanged should the proposal to join St Clare Catholic MAT take place. We are not looking to change the uniform or the school day.

St Clare Catholic MAT is committed to retaining governors at school level and parents will continue to be represented at that level too.

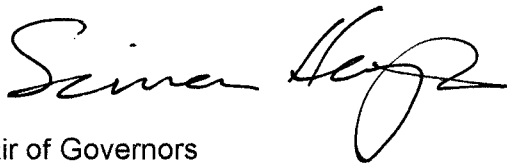
How to take part in the consultation process

We have set up a consultation email address to gather views. cmat@st-josephs.sheffield.sch.uk
If you are unable to access email, we are happy to hear your views in person at an information meeting we will schedule in school.

The Governing Body will receive and consider every communication, and we will provide a summary of responses to any questions raised, on the school website. Please be assured your views will be taken into consideration.

The consultation will close on **Friday 13th January 2023** The Governing Body will meet after this date to consider responses and decide how those responses should inform and enable the School's future.

Yours sincerely,



Chair of Governors



Headteacher